

CONSERVATION *Showcase*



Absentee Landowner Leads by Example

A retired farmer from Cambridge makes conservation a priority on each of his farms even though he does not farm the ground himself. “Jim Sievers installed conservation practices on the land he owns in five different Iowa counties. He’s saving soil, protecting water resources, improving soil quality and providing habitat for wildlife. I see him setting a good example for others and having fun while he does it,” says District Conservationist Jered Finley.

Finley, with U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in Boone, has worked with Sievers for seven years on conservation issues affecting his land.

“Every one of Sievers’ farms has some type of conservation on the ground,” said Finley. “We’ve helped him install terraces, bird buffers, wind breaks, Conservation Reserve



Jim Sievers

Program (CRP) filter strips, wetlands, drop structures and waterways. We have used a number of different programs to help pay for the work from the CRP Farmable Wetland Program and the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) to the Iowa Financial Incentive Program (IFIP). We have helped them find conservation practices to fit their farms. Every practice is helping to protect the environment and save soil.”

Finley said, “I can’t say enough about Jim’s conservation work ethic.”

Sievers was a veterinarian by trade. He graduated from Iowa State University in 1964 and practiced in Slater until 2003. Over the years, Sievers and his wife Mari-grace bought farmland, a field or farm at a time. Today they own 2,000 acres and custom farm the land.



Marigrace and Jim Sievers check their farm’s conservation plan with Jered Finley, NRCS district conservationist. Finley helped Sievers design and construct a field windbreak on their Boone County farm.

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Sievers says the many conservation practices protect his soil and help him enjoy the land. “They attract wildlife and provide habitat,” said Sievers. “This makes it great for wildlife watching and hunting. We can all enjoy the land and the hunters in the family really like the better hunting.”

They share their land with friends, too. Sievers said, “A friend from Ankeny comes to our Boone County farm to walk our fields and buffers. Other friends come up to hunt. Even our pastor asked to go after squirrels. She took her rifle out to the farm, looked at the different wildlife, watched the squirrels play and didn’t shoot a thing. She told me she had a great time.”

“Seeing others enjoying the land is why I say I’m having fun with conservation,” said Sievers.

Sievers started working with NRCS in 1996 and he believes conservation is long term. “It’s well beyond my lifetime,” he said. “You know you are doing these things for others in the future.”

That future means involving his family in conservation now. The Sievers have three children and nine grandchildren.

“Jim will bring his grandchildren along when he visits our office,” said Finley. “That’s great. It gets the youngsters involved in land conservation and stewardship at an early age. He’s leading by example.”

For information on conservation practices and programs to protect your farmland, visit or call your local NRCS office.

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